

Voice Dissertation

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
RECITAL 1	1
Recital 1 Program	1
Recital 1 Program Notes	2
RECITAL 2	
Recital 2 Program	23
Recital 2 Program Notes	24
RECITAL 3	
Recital 3 Program	47
Recital 3 Program Notes	48

ABSTRACT

Recital one features the music of Enrique Granados and Samuel Barber. The four songs from Granados's collection of Tonadillas are written in the style of folk melodies. The piano accompaniment imitates the sound of the Spanish guitar. The aria "La maja y el ruiseñor" from his opera *Goyescas* is set to the music of his piano solo with the same name. Barber's Opus 13 is set to four poems with disparate themes and contrasting musical settings. "Do not utter a word" from *Vanessa* is highly dramatic and musically complex. *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is performed with orchestra and features contrasting sounds within the chamber orchestra setting. The pastoral sections feature woodwinds and strings in lilting compound meters while the industrial images are depicted by brass and syncopated rhythms.

Recital two presents the music of Henry Purcell, Franz Schubert, and Richard Strauss. This recital shows differing perspectives on death with three distinct compositional styles. "When I am laid in earth" from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* has a lament style accompaniment with a chromatic descending bass line. Schubert's song settings are dramatic and full of text painting. Richard Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* have rich orchestral textures and drawn-out harmonic progressions.

Recital three features music by living composers Dustin Dunn, Lynn Glassock, and Jessica Hunt. Dunn's *Grandmother's Hymnal* includes extended techniques and fragmented text. Glassock's *Five songs for voice and marimba* features five poems by Emily Dickenson. The interaction between marimba and voice creates a duet texture. Hunt's *Songs of Autumn* and *Levi 501s* contain harmonies built on stacked fifths and are often modal. The rapidly shifting rhythmic meters accommodate the rhythm of speech that Hunt prioritizes.

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RECITAL 1 PROGRAM

Elise Eden, Soprano
John Etsell, Piano
Tal Ben-Atar, Conductor

Britton Recital Hall

El mirar de la Maja
La maja dolorosa No.1
La maja dolorosa No. 2
La maja dolorosa No. 3

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

La maja y el ruiseñor
from *Goyescas*

Intermission

Four Songs, Opus 13
A Nun Takes the Veil
The Secrets of the Old
Sure on This Shining Night
Nocturne

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

“Do not utter a word...”
From *Vanessa*

Knoxville: Summer of 1915

RECITAL 1 PROGRAM NOTES

El mirar de la maja

Fernando Periquet

¿Por qué es en mis ojos
tan hondo el mirar
que a fin de cortar desdenes
y enojos los suelo entornar?
¿Qué fuego dentro llevarán
que si acaso con calor
los clavo en mi amor
sonrojo me dan?

Por eso el chispero
a quien mi alma dí
al verse ante mí
me tira el sombrero
y dícame así:
"Mi maja, no me mires más
que tus ojos rayos son
y ardiendo en pasión
la muerte me dan."¹

La maja dolorosa, nùm. 1

¡Oh muerte cruel!
¿Por qué tú, a traición,
mi majo arrebataste a mi pasión?
¡No quiero vivir sin él,
porque es morir,
porque es morir así vivir!

The look of the maja

*Why is it in my eyes
so intense the look
that in order to stop disdain
that I am in the habit of half-closing my eyes?
What fire they have inside
that if perhaps with ardor
I fix them on my love
they make me blush?*

*For that the chispero
to whom I gave my soul
sees himself before me
tosses his hat to me
and says to me, like this:
My maja, look at me no more
for your eyes are rays
and burning in death
they give me death.*

The sorrowful maja, no. 1

*Oh cruel death!
Why you, with betrayal,
Snatched away my majo from my passion?
I do not want to live without him,
because it is death,
because it is death to live this way.*

¹ All Spanish texts translated by Suzanne Rhodes Draayer of IPA Source.com.

No es posible ya sentir más dolor:
en lágrimas deshecha ya mi alma está.
¡Oh Dios, torna mi amor,
porque es morir,
porque es morir así vivir!

La maja dolorosa, nùm. 2

¡Ay majo de mi vida,
no, no, tú no has muerto!
¿Acaso yo existiese si fuera eso cierto?

¡Quiero, loca, besar tu boca!
Quiero segura,
gozar más de tu ventura,
¡ay!, de tu ventura.

Mas, ¡ay!, deliro, sueño:
mi majo no existe.
En torno mío el mundo lloroso está y triste.
¡A mi duelo no hallo consuelo!
Mas muerto y frío siempre el majo será mío.
¡Ay! Siempre mío.

La maja dolorosa, nùm. 3

De aquel majo amante
que fué mi gloria
guardo anhelante dichosa memoria.
El me adoraba vehemente y fiel.

*It is not possible now to feel more grief:
my soul is destroyed in tears.
Oh, God, return my love,
because it is death,
because it is death to live this way.*

The sorrowful maja, no. 2

*Ay majo of my life,
no, no, you have not died!
How could I exist if that were true?*

*I madly want to kiss your mouth!
I want securely
to enjoy more of your happiness,
Ay, your happiness.*

*But, ay! I am delirious, dreaming:
my majo does not exist.
The word around me is mournful and sad.
I find no consolation to my grief!
But dead and cold always my majo will be.
Ay! Always mine.*

The sorrowful maja, no. 3

*Of that majo lover
who was my glory
I eagerly keep a happy memory.
He worshipped me fervently and faithfully.*

Yo mi vida entera di a él.

Y otras mil diera si él
quisiera,

que en hondos amores martirios son las flores.

Y al recordar mi majo amado

van resurgiendo ensueños de un tiempo
pasado.

I gave him my whole life.

*And another thousand I would give if he
wanted,*

in profound love, torments are the flowers.

And when remembering my beloved majo,

*the dreams reappear of a time
passed.*

Ni en el Mentidero ni en la Florida

majo más majo paseó en la vida.

Bajo el chambergo sus ojos ví

con toda el alma puestos en mí

Neither in the Mentidero nor in the Florida

a man more majo than he did ever walk.

under the wide brimmed hat I saw his eyes

with all his soul fixed on me.

q

ue a quien miraban enamoraban,

pues no hallé en el mundo

mirar más profundo.

Y al recordar mi majo amado

van resurgiendo ensueños de un tiempo
pasado.

*Whoever they looked at, they won the heart
of*

because I have not found in the world

a more profound look.

And when remembering my beloved majo

*the dreams reappear of a time passed.
passed.*

La Maja y el Ruisenor

¿Por qué entre sombras el ruisenor

entona su armonioso cantar?

¿Acaso al rey del día guarda rencor ?

¿Y de él quiere algún agravio vengar?

Guarda quizás su pecho oculto tal dolor,

que en la sombra espera alivio hallar,

triste entonando cantos de amor. ¡Ay!

The Maja and the Nightingale

Why in the shadows does the nightingale

Sing its harmonious song?

*Perhaps it bears a grudge against the Sun,
King of the Day*

Or wants to avenge some grievance?

*Perhaps she keeps hidden in her breast such
grief*

That she hopes to find relief in the shadows,

Sadly singing her songs of love.

¡Y tal vez alguna flor temblorosa del pudor de amor,

Or maybe some flower, trembling with the blushes of love,

es la esclava enamorada de su cantor!...

Is the love-lorn slave of her song.

¡Misterio es el cantar

Mysterious is the song

que entona envuelto en sombra el ruiseñor!

Which the nightingale chants, wrapped in the shadows!

¡Ah! Son los amores como flor

Ah! Love is like a flower

a merced de la mar.

At the mercy of the sea.

¡Amor! ¡Amor!

Love! Love!

¡Ah, no hay cantar sin amor!

Ah, there is no singing without love!

¡Ah! ruiseñor: es tu cantar
himno de amor.

*Ah! Nightingale: this your singing is a
hymn of love.*

A Nun Takes the Veil (Heaven-Haven)

Gerard Manley Hopkins

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb
And out of the swing of the sea.

Sure on this Shining Night

James Agee

Sure on this shining night
Of star-made shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.
The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.
Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wand'ring far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

Secrets of the Old

William Butler Yeats

I have old women's secrets now
That had those of the young;
Madge tells me what I dared not think
When my blood was strong,
And what had drowned a lover once
Sounds like an old song.
Though Marg'ry is stricken dumb
If thrown in Madge's way,
We three make up a solitude;
For none alive today
Can know the stories that we know
Or say the things we say:
How such a man pleased women most
Of all that are gone,
How such a pair loved many years
And such a pair but one,
Stories of the bed of straw
Or the bed of down.

Nocturne

Frederic Prokosch

Close, my darling, both your eyes,
Let your arms lie still at last.
Calm the lake of falsehood lies
And the wind of lust has passed,
Waves across these hopeless sands
Fill my heart and end my day,
Underneath your moving hands
All my aching flows away.
Even the human pyramids
Blaze with such a longing now:
Close, my love, your trembling lids,
Let the midnight heal your brow.
Northward flames Orion's horn,
Westward th'Egyptian light.
None to watch us, none to warn
But the blind eternal night.

Do not utter a word from *Vanessa*

Librettist Gian Carlo Menotti

Do not utter a word, Anatol, do not move;
You may not wish to stay.
For over twenty years in stillness, in silence, I have waited for you.
I have always been sure, I have always known you would come back to me, Anatol;
I have scarcely breathed so that life should not leave its trace
And nothing might change in me that you loved;
Alone, apart, unseen, I have waited for you.

Oh, how dark, how desperate, how blind, to let the days go by unmarked, unheeded!
How endless, how lonely, how wrong to rob a beating heart of time and space!

Beauty is the hardest gift to shelter, harder than death to stay.
All this I have done for you!

Now listen, listen, listen well:

Unless you still love me I do not want you to see me, Anatol.

Without love, do not dare look in my eyes

Because all change, all change begins when love has died.

Tell me, Anatol, do you love me?

Do you still love me as once you did?

For if you do not, I shall ask you to leave my house this very night!

Excerpt from James Agee's Knoxville: Summer of 1915 as set by Samuel Barber

We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville Tennessee in the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child.

...It has become that time of evening when people sit on their porches, rocking gently and talking gently and watching the street and the standing up into their sphere of possession of the trees, of birds' hung havens, hangars. People go by; things go by. A horse, drawing a buggy, breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt: a loud auto: a quiet auto: people in pairs, not in a hurry, scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body, talking casually, the taste hovering over them of vanilla, strawberry, pasteboard, and starched milk, the image upon them of lovers and horsemen, squaring with clowns in hueless amber. A streetcar raising its iron moan; stopping; belling and starting, stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter; fainting, lifting, lifts, faints foregone: forgotten. Now is the night one blue dew.

Now is the night one blue dew, my father has drained, he has coiled the hose.

Low in the length of lawns, a frailing of fire who breathes...

Parents on porches: rock and rock. From damp strings morning glories hang their ancient faces.

The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums.

On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there....They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all in particular, of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine,...with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, she is living at home. One is my mother who is good to me. One is my father who is good to me. By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night. May God bless my people, my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father, oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble; and in the hour of their taking away.

After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am.

In his short life, Enrique Granados (1867-1916) became a legend in the history of Spanish music. He pioneered a new genre of Spanish song², performed as a virtuoso pianist who was famed for his improvisatory skills³, and wrote five lyric dramas⁴. He succeeded despite having crippling performance anxiety⁵ and financial disadvantage through tenacity and years of hard work.

Granados was the son of a decorated military father. While this profession was respected, it did not carry great prestige. His family moved frequently throughout his childhood due to his father's career in the military, and though he was born in Catalonia on July 21st, 1867 he only lived there for the first three years of his life. Some of the most memorable years of his childhood were spent in Tenerife in the Canary Islands, and it was at this time that his father sustained life changing injuries from an equestrian accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down. His father's lifestyle had a major impact on Enrique's development and career path. He was surrounded by military music that influenced his early piano compositions and received his earliest musical education from an elderly Castilian soldier. Unfortunately, Granados was thrust into the working world at the age of thirteen when his father died suddenly.

Granados did not have much formal education beyond his piano studies, so he earned money for his family as a pianist working in Barcelona cafes. There he met Eduardo Conde, a man who would be his biggest supporter and change his life forever. Conde was a wealthy department store owner who loved music and recognized the enormous potential in the young Granados. He hired Granados to teach music to his daughters and funded additional education

² Walter Aaron Clark, *Enrique Granados: Poet of the Piano*.(Oxford [U.K.]: Oxford University Press), 2006. 112.

³ A. L. Mason "Enrique Granados (1867-1916)." *Music & Letters* 14, no. 3 (1933): 237.

⁴ Mark Larrad and Mark Larraz. "THE LYRIC DRAMAS OF ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1867-1916)." *Revista De Musicología* 14, no. 1/2 (1991): 149-66.

⁵ Walter Aaron Clark, *Enrique Granados: Poet of the Piano* (Oxford [U.K.]: Oxford University Press, 2006), 24.

with Charles de Bériot. Bériot played a large role in Granados's love of the voice, and the importance of pedaling and voicing.

In 1891 Granados met Amparo Sabater, his future wife, love of his life, and source of much creative inspiration. Though Amparo came from a wealthy family and Enrique from the working class, they were permitted to marry in 1893. The couple would go on to have six children, and often struggled financially. Despite these struggles, Granados stayed committed to his career as a musician.

An important social and intellectual movement focused on cultural representation and national identity emerged following the end of the Spanish-American war in 1898. A need emerged for cultural representation and national identity. Granados read works by well-known author Miguel de Unamuno who asserted that Spain's true cultural identity ". . . will only be discovered by Europeanized Spaniards". He also viewed Castile as the region in which the purest and most authentic Spanish spirit resided. Granados was already attracted to Castilian culture and history.

Perhaps the most important influence on Granados' song composition was the painter Francisco Goya y Lucientes, some of whose paintings were full of romanticized and imagined moments in Spanish history. His paintings featured bohemian characters known as majos and majas. Majos were pictured in wigs and lace trimmed capes, and majas were depicted as street smart, working class women. These characters captured the fascination of artists across the disciplines who viewed Goya as a symbol of Spanish resilience after the recent defeat in war.

Between 1912-1913 Granados composed his collection of *Tonadillas*. They imitated songs from eighteenth-century short stage works known as *tonadillas*. One kind of *tonadilla* was influenced by Italian opera, while the other included simple songs in a popular vernacular style.

Granados's *Tonadillas al estilo antiguo* were influenced by the early history of the *tonadilla*, but ultimately combined the European tradition of art-song and Spanish popular song. Granados first met poet Fernando Periquet Zuaznábar in 1894, and the two connected over their shared love of Goya. This connection led to Granados setting his collection of songs to poetry written exclusively by Periquet. In the three-song set "La maja dolorosa", a maja receives the news that her beloved majo has died. In the first song, Granados writes a dramatic declamatory vocal line expressing the unbridled grief of the maja as she confronts death itself for taking away her beloved. This song contains large dissonant leaps, and a two and a half octave range. The song requires the singer to move through these registers seamlessly, allowing the audience to hear the heights and depths of the maja's desperation.

The second song in "La Maja Dolorosa" has a naive folk music sound. The piano accompaniment is arpeggiated with sparse voicing, evoking the sound of a guitar so often heard in popular Spanish music. This accompaniment also implies a level of acceptance and level headedness of the maja not seen in the first song. It is in this text that she expresses her desire to be with her majo once more, and the realization that she must live the rest of her life without him. The closing melody is sinking and hopeless, leaving the audience wondering how this woman will survive her loss.

In the final song, the maja delivers a moving eulogy for her lover, again accompanied by a guitar style piano part. Her emotion and vocal line reach a new low, sinking down to an F3. Though she is weighted down by her grief and despair, she can reflect on the beautiful memories she and her majo made together, ending the set in a major key with hope for the future.

Periquet also wrote the libretto for Granados' stage adaptation of his piano suite, *Goyescas*. The stage adaptation of *Goyescas* is the work from which "La maja y el ruiseñor" is

extracted. This aria maintains the original title from the piano work and appears in the final tableau of this one-act stage work. The aria is sung by Rosario, a high-born lady who finds herself unable to prove her love to her partner Fernando. In this aria, Rosario sits in her garden and listens to the song of a nightingale. As she hears its song, she wonders why the bird sings. Is he angry? Is his heart full of grief? Perhaps he is looking for comfort from the pangs of love? As she projects her own emotions into his song she makes her way to a conclusion about her own quandary. She comes to the grand realization that there is no song without love, a poetic conclusion that is ended by the beckoning call of her lover.

Samuel Barber is well loved by singers for his sensitive and intuitive settings of texts. His music captures the emotion of the text in an evocative and engaging way. Whether in art song, opera, or orchestral music, Barber compels his audiences to surrender their perceptions for his own.

Barber was born on March 9th, 1910 in West Chester, Pennsylvania to Daisy and Roy. He and his sister Sara were quite close, and both studied music, Samuel excelled and knew from a young age that he was meant to be a composer. Roy and Daisy had hoped that Samuel would attend Princeton to study medicine, because music was not regarded as a serious profession in their small community. By the age of nine, however, Samuel had remorsefully informed his mother that he was meant to be a composer.

Barber had excellent musical role models in his aunt Louise Homer and her husband Sidney. Louise was a famous contralto who had a twenty-year career at the Metropolitan Opera House. Sidney was a composer who reviewed and advised Barber on many of his compositions. Barber described his aunt as having a "rich low voice combined with brilliant high notes that Verdi would have liked" By the time Barber was enrolled in musical study at the Curtis

Institute of Music at age fourteen, his aunt Louise was singing his compositions. Uncle Sidney was a composer who reviewed and advised Barber on many of his pieces. In 1934 Barber studied voice independently in Vienna with John Braun, so his gift for vocal music undoubtedly was shaped not only by his aunt but also by his own experience as a singer.

In 1937 Barber composed the four songs of his opus 13, each setting a poem by a different poet on disparate subjects. "A Nun takes the Veil" is set to text by Gerard Manly Hopkins (1844-1889) that expresses a woman's decision to join a convent for a safe and simple life. Barber's setting is notably simple, the accompaniment comprised largely of rolled chords with dynamic swells that convey intensity and conviction. The vocal line is declamatory with moments of introspection illustrated by large dynamic contrasts.

"Secrets of the Old" sets a text by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) from his collection of poetry *The Tower*. It is the ninth poem in a set of eleven, titled "A Man Young and Old". This set describes the life of two lovers, and the emotional development of the speaker who begins as a young man and ends old and lonely. His reflections focus on a range of topics, from virility, to rejection, and to satisfaction. Given Barber's long-time partnership with Gian Carlo Menotti, it is not hard to see "Secrets of the Old" as a reflection on the duality of his partner and the appreciation he developed throughout their years together. Barber sets this poem in alternating meters, causing erratic rhythmic displacement to reflect the subject of the poem, a woman who has created ecstasy and chaos within the life of this man.

"Sure on This Shining Night" is one of Barber's best known songs. It is set to American poet James Agee's (1909-1955) poem from *Permit Me Voyage*. Both this and the first song were arranged for chorus thirty years after their original composition by Barber. Agee's writings are filled with alliteration and rich imagery. Barber sets this text with very specific instructions for

articulation and dynamic shaping, but the song retains a feeling of simplicity. The poem is sentimental and inviting with moments of deep introspection. Though the text suggests a single voice, Barber allows the piano to sing a staggered version of the melody and allows the piano to make the first statement before the final lines. The piano becomes a character on its own and makes this otherwise solitary voice joined by the energy which surrounds it.

"Nocturne" is set to the poetry of Frederic Prokosch (1906-1989) which was published in his collection *The Carnival*. Prokosch was Barber's friend, and their friendship motivated his setting of the poem. Though he was not particularly fond of Prokosch's work, he admitted that music sprang from the text, so he felt moved to set it. Barber chose to omit one of the five original verses, but preserved the sensual spirit of the text. The undulating piano part and dynamic growth at the climax of the piece shade this already erotic poetry seamlessly.

In 1928 Gian Carlo Menotti and Samuel Barber met and fell in love while studying at the Curtis Institute. They travelled to Europe where they actively composed after their graduation in 1933. Menotti was busy writing the libretto and music for *Amelia Goes to the Ball* which premiered at The Curtis Institute in 1937. A year later it played at the Metropolitan Opera. Menotti saw great successes with his operas and the librettos he wrote for them. As early as 1934 Barber expressed interest in writing his own opera but could not find a suitable libretto. When World War II broke out Barber was drafted into the Army which further delayed his hopes of finding a libretto and writing his American opera. By 1952 Barber had approached James Agee, Stephen Spender, and Dylan Thomas to no avail. In a letter to his uncle Sidney in the spring of 1952, Barber informs him that Menotti will be writing the libretto for his opera. The demands of Menotti's career delayed the completion of the libretto, and it was 1956 before Barber would begin composing the opera. Menotti's libretto for *Vanessa* was nearly unchanged by Barber. In

an interview with Allan Kozinn, Barber noted getting lost in the high stakes drama and complex characters. He also mentions that Menotti helped him make musical revisions. Menotti was the stage director for the Metropolitan Opera Premiere in the 1957-1958 season. The opera was a huge success and premiered to a sold-out audience. Eleanor Steber, who stepped in weeks before as a last-minute replacement, executed the role superbly.

Vanessa is the story of a beautiful baroness who has been waiting for twenty years for the return of her lover, Anatol. During her waiting she covered the mirrors in the house and did not leave home, anxiously awaiting his return. When she hears news that Anatol is on his way to visit, her niece Erika and elderly mother both express their concern for the outcome. "Do not utter a word..." appears in the first act of the opera when Anatol arrives. Vanessa keeps her back to Anatol for the duration of the aria, refusing to look at him unless he proclaims his love for her. This highly dramatic moment ends with a twist when she turns around to see the son of Anatol, who shares the same name. The opera contains many unexpected moments, including the seduction of Erika by Anatol. The secret of their sexual encounter on his first night at Vanessa's home remains a secret, and the audience sees Vanessa turn a blind eye to any indication of his manipulation. In the end, Vanessa departs with Anatol for Paris. Erika is left waiting, repeating the cycle of hopelessness that her aunt endured.

Opus 13 was not the sole instance in which Barber set poetry by James Agee. On April 4th of 1947 Barber finished writing his *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* for soprano and orchestra. Barber encountered this poem in *The Partisan Reader: Ten Years of Partisan Review, 1934-1944. An Anthology*. Barber and Agee were both five years old in the summer of 1915, and Barber connected with the poem because it reminded him of his own childhood.⁶

⁶ Information concerning Samuel Barber is drawn from *Samuel Barber The Composer and His Music* by Barbara Heyman.

James Rufus Agee was a film critic for *Time* and *The Nation*, and worked as a screenwriter, poet, journalist, and author of fiction. He was Born in Knoxville, Tennessee and his parents were of the working-class. When Agee was six years old in 1915, his father was killed in a car accident. This traumatic event provided the subject for his book *A Death in the Family*, which tells the story of Agee's father's death from the fictionalized perspective of each family member. Though *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* would later be published as the opening for *A Death in the Family*, it originally appeared in *The Partisan Review*.⁷ There are direct ties between *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and *A Death in the Family* that led to the posthumous addition of this poem as a foreword. In *A Death in the Family* Rufus recalls the vivid memory of his mother delivering the news of his father's death:

" . . . through her breathing he began once more to hear the quarreling sparrows; he said to himself: *dead, dead*, but all he could do and see and hear; the streetcar raised and quieted its grim, iron cry..."⁸

This text correlates with imagery found in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* in which Agee writes:

"A street car raising its iron moan; stopping, belling and starting; stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan . . . "

Agee's writing in *A Death in the Family* is cinematic. Each memory is provided in vivid detail, the intention and thought of each character are made entirely clear. Sense memory is a vital element in these recollections, such that the reader may experience these memories within their own scope. This connection bonds the reader emotionally to the story and each character within

⁷ Danny Heitman, "Let Us Now Praise James Agee." *HUMANITIES* 33, no. 4 (July 2012),5.

⁸ James Agee and Blake Morrison. *A Death in the Family*. London: Penguin Books, (2015), 228.

it. Though *A Death in the Family* is written from imagined perspectives, the characters and events within the story are based on the Agee family's response to the tragic loss of his father.

Barber's talent for text painting is displayed in his setting of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. The sounds created by instrumentation, metric changes, and musical intuition are just as evocative as the text Agee provides. Though *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is through composed, there are clear sections within the piece that mark changes in mood and subject.

Barber set only the last third of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, omitting just a few lines in draft revisions. Though Barber did not meet Agee until after the completion of the piece,⁹ it is probable that he was familiar with the context of the essay and the importance of the year 1915 for Agee. Barber's musical recollections capture the sentiment in Agee's text. Barber opens with a warm pastoral scene, featuring woodwinds and double reeds moving in parallel. The meter shifts from simple to compound, and the flute creates the rocking chairs on which the characters sit. Sweeping string lines ebb and flow as the focus of the text shifts from one subject to the next. Barber incorporates bird calls into the clarinet line beginning one measure after box 2. The simple rocking of the chairs now includes an extra sonic element. At the end of this warm opening section, a change is signaled by a trumpet call two measures before box 4. By the time the orchestra arrives at box 5, the texture has shifted completely to chaos and dissonance. The rounded meters submit to irregular meters which disorient the listener from the placement of the beat. When the voice enters at box 7, the dynamics have increased drastically, and the line is much more declamatory. The text itself has a colder imagery, moving away from the elements to address the ominous traits of industrialism. This section is where the text references Rufus' recollection of the sounds of a car outside when he is notified of his father's passing. The

⁹ Benedict Taylor, "Nostalgia and Cultural Memory in Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*." *Journal of Musicology* 25, no. 3 (2008), 215.

chromaticism and lack of tonal centrality impart the horror of this moment in a tangible way. Barber calls for dramatic dynamics, and the vocal line lives in a higher tessitura than the comfortable middle voiced opening. A chromatic wave of pitches and unusual staccato articulations on every syllable of "the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it" paint the crackling and sparking of these industrial fever dreams. This section is full of metric and tonal shifts, but as the instrumentation thins, the transition to the next memory begins. This transition is marked by the end of the frantic dotted sixteenth motive that has been passed from one instrument to the next for the duration of this traumatic memory.

Even before the formal shift to compound meter at box 12, Barber writes overlapping lines of eighth notes in groups of three, creating a metric transition reminiscent of a dream sequence. Though this section is comparatively short, it creates a momentary return to the comfort of the first vocal statement. Ending with text "the dry and exalted locusts from all the air at once enchants my eardrums" guides the listener to sleep, and a departure to a different memory.

At box 13 the listener is gently transported to a back yard memory. The family is lying on quilts, quietly talking amongst themselves when the perspective shifts to the stars above. The harp twinkles with high octave grace notes, and the orchestra moves ahead with sweeping lines in the orchestra that foreshadow the gentle and meaningless voices of the surrounding adults. As these adults are affectionately observed, Barber increases the dynamics and height of the vocal line, almost bursting with joy. This intense joy quickly turns to an equally intense sense of loss as the childlike perspective is momentarily overshadowed by the adult awareness for the existential realization, "By some chance, here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell

the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass, in a summer evening, among the sounds of the night."

The music takes on a deeply reverent and stoic character as this train of thought leads to a prayer for those family members in their moments of trouble and death. In Agee's fictional re-telling of the passing of his father, the family has a traumatic experience with the family's priest. Because Rufus' father was not a Catholic, the priest firmly tells his deeply religious mother that he will not be receiving a church funeral. The dark moment is described,

They could not conceive of what was being done to their mother, but in his own way was sure it was something evil, to which she was submitting almost without a struggle, and by which she was deceived. Rufus repeatedly saw himself flinging open the door and striding in, a big stone in his hand, and saying, "You stop hurting my mother." Catherine knew only that a tall stranger in black, with a frightening jaw and queer hat, a man whom she hated and feared, had broken into their house, had been welcomed first by Aunt Hannah and then by her mother herself, had sat in her father's chair as if he thought he belonged there, talked meanly to her in words she could not understand, and was now doing secret and cruel things to her mother while Aunt Hannah looked on.¹⁰

This painful memory is intensified by a rise in tessitura, a fortissimo dynamic, and a declamatory ending. The brass instruments are finally unmuted to wail with sorrow before this emotional moment passes and a return to comfort arrives in box 25. The English horn urges the voice to return, playing the opening melody of the first vocal statement. The dynamics are soft, the vocal line almost static until the voice sweeps into a high, soft, sweet duet with the first violin on "sleep, soft smiling draws me unto her". A final reflection on the tender memories of family lead to the important conclusion: "...will not, oh will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am." This conclusion swells to a fortissimo dynamic, but drastically shifts to pianissimo as

¹⁰ James and Blake Morrison. *A Death in the Family*. London: Penguin Books (2015), 270.

if to convey inner peace. The orchestra closes with the opening vocal statement, gently floating into the ether.

Agee's text is ripe with opportunity for expressive delivery. It is full of alliteration and flows as if in a stream of consciousness. The intimate imagery is preserved by Barber's choice of light instrumentation. Barber had begun writing *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* before it was formally commissioned by Elenor Steber, but she played a critical role in its revision and first delivery to the public. Steber made recommendations for revisions, including a shift to a higher register for the challenging passage "now is the night one blue dew" which is famously difficult for the pianissimo dynamic on a Bb 5. This recommendation was made so that the voice could more easily be heard over the orchestra. The piece was premiered on April 9th, 1948 by Elenor Steber and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sergei Alexandrovich Koussevitzky. The piece was dedicated to his father, who had passed away by the time of its premiere.

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RECITAL 2 PROGRAM

Elise Eden, Soprano
John Etsell, Piano

Britton Recital Hall

When I am Laid in Earth
from *Dido and Aeneas*

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Gretchen am Spinnrade
Die Liebe hat gelogen
Der Leiermann
Die Krähe
Totengräbers Heimweh

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Intermission

Vier letzte Lieder
I. Frühling
II. September
III. Beim Schlafengehn
IV. Im Abendrot

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

RECITAL 2 PROGRAM NOTES

Gretchen am Spinnrade

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Meine Ruh' ist hin,
Mein Herz ist schwer,
Ich finde sie nimmer
Und nimmermehr.

Wo ich ihn nicht hab'
Ist mir das Grab,
Die ganze Welt
Ist mir vergällt.

Mein armer Kopf
Ist mir verrückt
Mein armer Sinn
Ist mir zerstückt.

Nach ihm nur schau' ich
Zum Fenster hinaus,
Nach ihm nur geh' ich
Aus dem Haus.

Sein hoher Gang,
Sein' edle Gestalt,
Seines Mundes Lächeln,
Seiner Augen Gewalt.
Und seiner Rede
Zauberfluss.
Sein Händedruck,
Und ach, sein Kuss!

Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel

*My peace is gone
My heart is heavy;
I shall never
Ever find peace again.*

*When he's not with me,
Life's like the grave;
The whole world
Is turned to gall.*

*My poor head
Is crazed,
My poor mind
Shattered.*

*It's only for him
I gaze from the window,
It's only for him
I leave the house.*

*His proud bearing
His noble form,
The smile on his lips,
The power of his eyes,
And the magic flow
Of his words,
The touch of his hand,
And ah, his kiss!*

Mein Busen drängt sich
Nach ihm hin.
Ach dürft' ich fassen
Und halten ihn.
Und küssen ihn
So wie ich wollt'
An seinen Küssen vergehen sollt'!

Die Liebe hat gelogen
August von Platen

Die Liebe hat gelogen,
Die Sorge lastet schwer,
Betrogen, ach! betrogen
Hat alles mich umher!
Es rinnen helle Tropfen
Die Wange stets herab,
Laß ab, laß ab zu klopfen,
Laß ab, mein Herz, laß ab!

Der Leiermann
Wilhelm Müller

Drüben hinter'm Dorfe
Steht ein Leiermann,
Und mit starren Fingern
Dreht er was er kann.

Barfuss auf dem Eise
Schwankt er hin und her;
Und sein kleiner Teller
Bleibt ihm immer leer.

*My bosom
Yearns for him.
Ah! if I could clasp
And hold him,
And kiss him
To my heart's content,
And in his kisses perish!*

Love has lied

*Love has lied,
Sorrow oppresses me,
I am betrayed, ah, betrayed
By all around!
Hot tears keep flowing
Down my cheeks,
Beat no more, my heart,
Wretched heart, beat no more!¹¹*

The Hurdy-Gurdy Player

*There, beyond the village,
stands a hurdy-gurdy player;
with numb fingers
he plays as best he can.*

*Barefoot on the ice
he totters to and fro,
and his little plate
remains forever empty.*

¹¹ English translation by Richard Stokes

Keiner mag ihn hören,
Keiner sieht ihn an;
Und die Hunde knurren
Um den alten Mann.

*No one wants to listen,
no one looks at him,
and the dogs growl
around the old man.*

Und er lässt es gehen
Alles, wie es will,
Dreht, und seine Leier
Steht ihm nimmer still.

*And he lets everything go on
as it will;
he plays, and his hurdy-gurdy
never stops.*

Wunderlicher Alter, soll ich mit dir geh'n?
Willst zu meinen Liedern deine Leier dreh'n?

*Strange old man, shall I go with you?
Will you turn your hurdy-gurdy to my
songs?¹²*

Die Krähe
Wilhelm Müller

The Crow

Eine Krähe war mit mir
Aus der Stadt gezogen,
Ist bis heute für und für
Um mein Haupt geflogen.

*A crow has come with me
from the town,
and to this day
has been flying ceaselessly about my head.*

Krähe, wunderliches Tier,
Willst mich nicht verlassen?
Meinst wohl bald als Beute hier
Meinen Leib zu fassen?

*Crow, you strange creature,
will you not leave me?
Do you intend soon
to seize my body as prey?*

Nun, es wird nicht weit mehr gehen
An dem Wanderstabe.
Krähe, lass mich endlich sehn
Treue bis zum Grabe!

*Well, I do not have much further to walk
with my staff.
Crow, let me at last see
faithfulness unto the grave.¹³*

¹² English Translation by Richard Wigmore

¹³ English Translation by Richard Wigmore

Totengräbers Heimweh

Jacob Nicolaus

O Menschheit, o Leben! -
Was soll's? o was soll's?!
Grabe aus - scharre zu!
Tag und Nacht keine Ruh! -

Das Treiben, das Drängen -
Wohin? - o wohin? - -
"Ins Grab - tief hinab!"

O Schicksal - o traurige Pflicht
Ich trag's länger nicht! - -
Wann wirst du mir schlagen,
O Stunde der Ruh?!
O Tod! komm und drücke
Die Augen mir zu! - -

Im Leben, da ist's ach! so schwül!
Im Grabe - so friedlich, so kühl!
Doch ach, wer legt mich hinein? -
Ich stehe allein! - so ganz allein!! -

Von allen verlassen
Dem Tod nur verwandt,
Verweil' ich am Rande -
Das Kreuz in der Hand,
Und starre mit sehndem Blick,
Hinab - ins tiefe Grab! -

Gravedigger's longing

*O mankind – O life! –
To what end – oh what end?!
Digging out – filling in!
Day and night no rest! –*

*The urgency, the haste –
Where does it lead! – ah where?! - -
'Deep down – into the grave!' –*

*O fate – O sad duty –
I can bear it no more! - -
When will you toll for me,
O hour of peace?! –
O death! Come
And close my eyes! - -*

*Life, alas, is so oppressive! –
The grave so peaceful, so cool!
But ah! Who will lay me there? –
I stand alone! – so utterly alone!! –*

*Abandoned by all,
With death my only kin,
I linger on the edge –
Cross in hand,
And stare longingly
Down – into the deep grave! –*

O Heimat des Friedens,
Der Seligen Land!
An dich knüpft die Seele
Ein magisches Band. -
Du winkst mir von Ferne,
Du ewiges Licht:
Es schwinden die Sterne -
Das Auge schon bricht! - -
Ich sinke -Ihr Lieben, -Ich komm!

Frühling
Hermann Hesse

In dämmrigen Grüften
Träumte ich lang
Von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.

Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Gleiß und Zier,
Von Licht übergossen
Wie ein Wunder vor mir.

Du kennst mich wieder,
Du [lockest]¹ mich zart,
Es zittert durch all meine Glieder
Deine selige Gegenwart.

*O homeland of peace,
Land of the blessed!
A magic bond
Binds my soul to you. –
Eternal light,
You beckon me from afar: -
The stars vanish –
My eyes close in death! - -
I am sinking– Loved ones I come! ¹⁴*

Spring

*In twilit vaults
I dreamed for a long time
Of your trees and blue breezes,
Of your scent and bird song.*

*Now you lie revealed
In radiance and adornment,
Suffused with light,
Like a miracle before me.*

*You recognize me,
You entice me gently
Through all my limbs trembles
Your blissful presence.*

¹⁴ English Translation by Richard Stokes

September

Hermann Hesse

Der Garten trauert,
Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
Still seinem Ende entgegen.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
Nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
In den sterbenden Gartentraum.

Lange noch bei den Rosen
Bleibt er stehen, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die großen
Müdgewordnen Augen zu.

Beim Schlafengehn

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
Soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

September

*The garden is mourning,
the rain sinks coolly into the flowers.
Summer shudders
as it meets its end.*

*Leaf upon leaf drops golden
down from the lofty acacia.
Summer smiles, astonished and weak,
in the dying garden dream.*

*For a while still by the roses
it remains standing, yearning for peace.
Slowly it closes its large
eyes grown weary.*

While going to sleep

*Now that the day has made me so tired,
my dearest longings shall
be accepted kindly by the starry night
like a weary child.*

*Hands, cease your activity,
head, forget all of your thoughts;
all my senses now
will sink into slumber.*

*And my soul, unobserved,
will float about on untrammelled wings
in the enchanted circle of the night,
living a thousandfold more deeply.*

Im Abendrot

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
Gegangen Hand in Hand,
Vom Wandern ruhn wir beide
Nun überm stillen Land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
Es dunkelt schon die Luft,
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
Nachträumend in den Duft.

Tritt her, und laß sie schwirren,
Bald ist es Schlafenszeit,
Daß wir uns nicht verirren
In dieser Einsamkeit.

O weiter stiller Friede!
So tief im Abendrot,
Wie sind wir wandermüde -
Ist das etwas der Tod?

In Twilight

*Through adversity and joy
We've gone hand in hand;
We rest now from our wanderings
Upon this quiet land.*

*Around us slope the valleys,
The skies grow dark;
Two larks alone are just climbing,
As if after a dream, into the scented air.*

*Come here and let them whirl past,
For it will soon be time to rest;
We do not wish to get lost
In this solitude.*

*O wide, quiet peace,
So deep in the red dusk...
How weary we are of our travels --
Is this perhaps - Death?*

COVID-19 has claimed millions of lives since the outbreak began. Most people died from the effects of the virus itself, while some broke under the pressures of quarantine isolation and took their own lives. There is little escape from domestic violence during a stay-at-home order. Substance use has increased by 13% since the beginning of the pandemic, and overdoses have increased by 18%.¹⁵ This program highlights differing perspectives on death and is performed in memory of a dear friend who passed away after losing her own battles during the pandemic. Two of the composers on this program lived tragically short lives, one an alcoholic, and like the dedicatee were consummate artists dedicated to their craft to the very end. This program was prepared and performed with love and prayers for her eternal peace.

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) lived a short but productive life. He was born in London, England in 1659 to Henry and Elisabeth Purcell. Henry Purcell Senior and his brother Thomas Purcell were important role models for Henry Purcell Junior. Henry Purcell Senior was an actor, singer, choir singer, choir master, and music copyist. His position as master of the boys' choir of Westminster Abbey was timely. The Commonwealth, which was a product of civil war, had just ended in 1660. During the Commonwealth (1640-1660) the Puritans took over, cancelling concerts, closing theaters. This caused an abrupt pause of creativity in the creative arts in England. When the Monarchy was restored in 1660, musicians like Purcell worked fervently to restore what was lost. Unfortunately, Henry Purcell Senior died in 1664 leaving Henry Purcell Junior a fatherless child of five years. It was in this year that he joined the choir of the Chapel Royal as one of the "Children of the Chapel" under the direction of Samuel Pepys. Purcell's uncle Thomas took an active role in his upbringing and was also employed as a music copyist,

¹⁵ Ashley Abramson, "Substance Use during the Pandemic." *Monitor on Psychology* 52, no. 2 (March 1, 2021): 22.

vicar of the Westminster Abbey, and lutenist to King Charles II. King Charles the II was enamored with all things French. He paid to have his instrumental conductor John Banister sent to France to study the styles of popular French music. The King's preference for French style had a large impact on both church and secular music. It was in this environment that Henry Purcell received his music education, and styles that would link him to the famous French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully.

While singing in the Chapel Royal, Purcell studied with his choir masters Henry Cooke (1616-1672), Pelham Humphrey (1647-1674), and John Blow (1649-1708). Humphrey only worked with Purcell for two years, but during that time he introduced declamatory recitative into anthems. This proved to be an important contribution to English music, and an influence that appears in Purcell's compositions. John Blow became choir master after Humphrey's death. Purcell was fifteen years old, and his voice was of no further use to the chapel. Blow supported Purcell through his transition from choir boy to composer. Blow wrote the masque *Venus and Adonis* in 1682 and it was performed for the King. It is thought that this composition, which was Blow's only stage work, was an inspiration for Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. In the years that Purcell studied under Blow, he worked as music copyist at the Westminster Abbey and theater composer. From 1680-1690 Purcell also served as an organist at the Abbey. In 1683 Purcell was hired as "composer in ordinary" to the King.¹⁶

The history of *Dido and Aeneas* is shrouded in mystery. The exact date of composition and first performance have become a disputed history. The year of the premiere could indicate the librettist and composer's intentions when they wrote the piece. If this opera was first performed for the monarchs, careful consideration would have been paid to any similarities

¹⁶ Percy A. Scholes, "Henry Purcell--A Sketch of a Busy Life." *The Musical Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1916): 442-64. Accessed July 17, 2021.

between current events and the plot of the opera. Parallels between the characters and the monarchy could be interpreted as praise or criticism.

The first page of the only surviving libretto does not have a date but indicates that it was performed at Josias Priest's Boarding School in Chelsea, London. This would have been a private performance given by amateurs, and there is no clarification on whether it was a premiere or a revival performance. Scholars have worked tirelessly to determine the date based on lines from the Epilogue, allegorical depiction of the royals, and a libretto for one of John Blow's operas. All these connections are speculative, but some theories hold more water than others. Ellen Harris notes that the most compelling evidence comes from the Epilogue. It was common practice for librettists and composers to praise the monarchy through allegory in the Epilogue. Kings and Queens were commonly compared to Venus and Mars as a commentary on their beauty and sexual virility.¹⁷ Whether the opera was written to pay homage to James II and his love for the country, or as a tribute to William crossing the channel to marry Mary it is likely that the Epilogue could apply to monarchs for years to come.¹⁸

The libretto Tate wrote was based on *Aeneid*, an epic poem in twelve books by Roman poet Virgil. There are important differences between Tate's libretto and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Tate censored the sex and violence that appeared in the poem. The opera is set in the Carthaginian court. Rather than being accompanied by her sister Anna as in the poem, Dido is with her chamber maid Belinda. Dido is in an unhappy state and is encouraged by Belinda and the other servants to share what is troubling her. It is here that she reveals she is in love with Aeneas. Though Aeneas has many virtuous qualities, their union would not better the political security of

¹⁷ Ellen T. Harris. *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*. Vol. Second edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017, 42.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

Carthage. Belinda and another servant tell Dido that her feelings are returned by Aeneas, and he enters the room. It is here that the main conflict is introduced: Aeneas is destined to found Rome, but he swears to defy this destiny in favor of his love for Queen Dido. It is at this point that Tate omits the sexual consummation of their relationship, but it is implied in the third scene that it occurred.

Scene two shows a Sorceress planning the destruction of Dido with her servants. She plans to deceive Aeneas with a vision of Mercury wherein he is chastised for refusing his destiny. The Sorceress conjures a storm as Dido and Aeneas finish their hunt, and the inclement weather separates the lovers. After the vision of Mercury appears, Aeneas accepts that he must fulfill his fate. He sends for ships to embark on his journey. Dido discovers his plan to depart when she sees Trojan ships being prepared. Aeneas comes to her, saying he will stay with her, but Dido is not convinced of his fidelity. Though he resists, she demands that he leave. It is in this moment that Dido welcomes death, and after an exchange with the courtiers she sings her famous recitative and lament "Thy hand, Belinda...When I am laid in earth".¹⁹

Dido's perspective on death is dark and despondent. In the recitative she reveals that she welcomes the release of death, though it seems to bring her little comfort. As she begins her own eulogy in the aria, the phrase shape struggles to muster an ascending line. Any attempts at ascent are foiled with a weeping, sinking line. This feeling of hopelessness is not only reflected in the melody of the vocal line, but in the descending ground bass which characterizes a lament.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) is another composer who lived a short, but fruitful life. Though he never saw success as an opera composer, his collection of song is prolific. He composed over six hundred songs, and one must wonder if he had lived longer what more he

¹⁹ Ellen T. Harris. *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*. Vol. Second edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017, 6.

would have contributed to the canon. Still, Schubert has been credited for re-defining the importance of lieder, which had previously been seen as a minor genre. He labeled his songs with opus numbers, which not only helped track the order of compositions but signaled that these songs were a serious work. Schubert wrote complex accompaniments that interacted with the vocal line, parts that were not easy enough for people to play for themselves as they sat at the piano. Not only did Schubert elevate the complexity of the piano part, but he set his lieder to serious subjects by popular living poets. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) was the most popular living poet of his time, and it is no surprise that he set his texts more than any other. However, in the presence of this literary giant, Schubert also set poetry written by his friends. He turned immortalized simple poems with his settings.²⁰

To fully appreciate Schubert, one must look at his life experience and roots. Schubert came from a lower middle-class family. His grandfather Karl was a peasant farmer, and his father Franz senior a school master. Schubert's father encouraged his children to play violin and study music. Franz was tutored by his older brother Ignaz in piano. It became clear early on that the young Franz had a gift for composition and playing. In addition to playing, Franz sang in the local church choir. It was his experiences and successes in this choir that led to his audition and acceptance into the Vienna Seminary as a chorister of the Chapel of the Imperial Court. It was there that he met Antonio Salieri, and later Joseph von Spaun. Both men would become important figures in his life.

Once Schubert's voice broke, Salieri took him on as a private student. He taught him harmony and counterpoint. Schubert was recognized as a prodigy in music. His reputation garnered an offer for scholarship and employment by Emperor Francis, but Schubert chose

²⁰ Christopher H. Gibbs., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*. Cambridge Companions to Music. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

instead to return home to teach for his father at the schoolhouse. Schubert stayed on with Salieri as a student and stayed in contact with his friends from school. When Schubert was seventeen, he set Goethe's *Gretchen am Spinnrade* op. 2 which has remained one of his most famous songs.²¹ At this young age Schubert already possessed the musical vocabulary to approach the adult themes of love and death in Goethe's poem. Though Gretchen's idea of dying in her lover's kiss is not as heavy as some of Schubert's later settings of death, this setting commanded a level of respect that other lieder of the time had not. Schubert's text painting of heart beats in the left hand, and a spinning wheel in the right deliver the audience into Gretchen's sitting room and psychology simultaneously. The dramatic climax in the middle and end of this song approach operatic territory yet remain in the genre of lieder. This lied was the first of many to disrupt the strophic form and pedestrian nature of the German tradition and immortalize the work of Franz Schubert.

Die Leibe hat gelogen was set much later in Schubert's life to the text of August von Platen-Hallermünde (1796-1835). This text was provided to Schubert by the poet himself before it was published in 1822, though the two never met. It is likely that Schubert and Platen were connected through Franz von Bruchmann, who was a member of Schubert's circle through Franz von Schober. This song is set much less extravagantly than *Gretchen am Spinnrade* but captures the mood of the poem just as effectively. The piano accompaniment and melody are not so divergent in this song, and both take on the characteristic of a dirge. The harmonization is more important than the texture in this case. In eighteen short measures this song manages to move through multiple keys, employing augmented sixth chords, and ending in the parallel major.

²¹ Peter Gammond, "Schubert." Book. *Composer as Contemporary*. London: Methuen, 1982.

The role of Franz von Schober in Schubert's life was far larger than connecting him to Bruchmann and Platen. Schober has gone down in history as one of the most destructive forces in Schubert's life. However, one must consider the larger picture when attempting to determine the cause of Schubert's fate.

In 1811 Schubert and his friends from Linz formed a group that considered themselves brothers in their common love of good. This circle would later be called the "Bildung Circle". They were dedicated to the pursuit of education and higher thinking for the improvement of society. They praised reading, translating, composition, and productivity in general. The members of the Bildung Circle were upper-middle class, while most Viennese citizens lived in want and squalor.²² Schubert was supported not only intellectually, but at times financially by members of this group. Though Schubert possessed the intellect and drive, he did not have the same access to wealth that most members had. Schubert was also known for having a duality in personality, one side very dark and the other jovial. In another sense, Schubert was living a dual life by leaving behind his humble roots to mingle with the bourgeoisie.

Franz Schober was an approachable type. He was charming and always well dressed. However, Schober had a reputation for promiscuity and laziness. He lived as a dandy on inherited wealth which he squandered quickly. He indulged in drink and was hardly ever productive. These qualities drew criticism from some of the more moral members of the group, particularly when Schubert began to take an interest in him in 1815. To those onlooking, Schubert was enamored by a silver-tongued seducer. It was not long before Schubert was drinking excessively and entertaining many lovers. Based on letters between Schubert and

²² Christopher H. Gibbs, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*. Cambridge Companions to Music. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 49.

Schober, it is likely that the two had a sexual relationship throughout their time as friends.²³

Though some members of the Bildung circle were concerned about the relationship between Schober and Schubert, 1815 was Schubert's most productive year as a composer. He wrote more songs and dances that year than any other and he attended many parties that earned the name "Schubertiade". At these parties Schubert and others would take turns making music and entertaining one another. By 1818 Schubert was engaged by Count Johann Carl Esterházy to teach his two daughters. Schubert's relationship with the Esterházy family allowed him to leave Vienna to compose at their country estate in Zseliz, which was a relief in the summer months when the air in Vienna was of low quality.²⁴

A few years later Schubert's fast life would catch up with him. Sometime in 1822 Schubert contracted syphilis and by the fall of 1823 he received treatment in a hospital for his symptoms. This proved to be a dark time for Schubert, and many of the songs he set during this time reflect his consideration of mortality. In this year he set *Todtengräbers Heimwehe* to text by Jacob Nicolaus Craigher Jachelutta (1797-1855). This song shows Schubert's talents for creating a dramatic scene with a single text. As the tone of the poem changes, so does the musical setting. The vocal lines begin in a declamatory style but little by little soften as the character approaches death. In his thankless line of work, the grave digger only finds repose in his own passing. With the uncertainty of his own health, one must wonder how much of this setting was autobiographical for Schubert.

²³ Maynard Solomon, "Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini." *19th-Century Music* 12, no. 3 (1989): 193-206.

²⁴ Christopher H. Gibbs., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*. Cambridge Companions to Music. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Following his release, the winter and spring of 1824 was another productive time for Schubert. That summer he returned to Zseliz to work with the Esterházy children. The fresh air of the country was a welcome change of scenery for Schubert. At the end of his season with the Esterházy family, Schubert returned to Vienna. Though it is hard to fathom, Schubert was already approaching his final years of life. Upon his return, Schubert developed a pattern of composing in the morning, taking a walk in the afternoon, and partying with his friends in the evening. Schubert was noted to drink excessively during these years, leaving friends to carry him out of the room when he lost the ability to walk. These habits likely hastened the symptoms of his condition and the rapid decline in his health.

In the last two years of his life Schubert wrote *Die Winterreise*, a cycle of twenty-four songs set to the poetry of Johann Ludwig Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827). Schubert wrote the collection of songs in two halves. The second half of the set was released after Schubert passed away from syphilis in 1828. *Der Leiermann* and *Die Krähe* are found in the second half of the cycle. Both songs focus on the inevitable death of the wandering character. *Der Leiermann* sets the scene with the sounds of the hurdy gurdy in the piano accompaniment. The drone and simple melody are chilling. In this setting only the speaker and hurdy gurdy player exist, though they are likely on a bustling street full of people. The spectral description of this hurdy gurdy player implies a supernatural quality. By the end of the song the speaker asks this man when he will play his song, cluing that this is not a human but the grim reaper. *Die Krähe* is equally chilling. The tempo is lively, and the crow is heard circling above the speaker seen not only as a companion but a prey animal. The voice part is doubled in the left hand for most of this song accompanied by the circling of the crow. This duet between crow and voice reinforces the

relationship that the speaker touts. Though the crow may be circling him to consume his corpse, this is also the most faithful companion he has.

This set of Schubert songs shows varying perspectives on death, perhaps through Schubert's own lens. In his younger years death was a distant concept and dramatic device. In the years of his illness and inevitable passing Schubert casts a shadow over the subject of death with much darker settings. These intimate settings suggest that Schubert had a sense of his inevitable fate, and that he felt isolated in his final years. The detailed history of Schubert's life allows one to see him as more than an elevated figure in musical history. One can connect his work with the events in his life. With the knowledge of his turbulent, short life we see a human being channeling their experiences through art. Perhaps this is the reason why his songs are such an important figure in standard repertoire. On a subconscious level, one is drawn to the humanity and truth in his songs. Perhaps this is what compels performers to tell his story.

The final perspective on death in this program is somewhat lighter than those that come before it. When comparing the lives of Purcell and Schubert to that of Richard Strauss (1864-1949), the biggest difference is the length of life. Perhaps the additional years of life prepared Strauss for death and allowed him to see it as a natural ending. Perhaps it was the amount of death that was happening around Strauss in the end of his life during the Holocaust. Richard Strauss is a problematic figure in music history due to his relationship with the Third Reich. The privilege he experienced as a non-Jewish German composer was used as a tool to further his career. These are all things that must be carefully considered and acknowledged when programming his music.

Richard had a sheltered childhood. His father Franz was a celebrated horn player who taught at the Royal School of Music in Munich. At the age of four Richard began taking music

lessons from his father's colleague who played with him in the Munich Court Orchestra. Franz did not educate Richard in music but chose who did. Franz also made it very clear that the music of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were appropriate role models for a composer.²⁵ During his time in the Munich Court Orchestra, Franz had occasion to work with Wagner. Though Franz did not like Wagner or his music, Wagner greatly admired Franz as he was one of the finest horn players in the country.²⁶ Franz had a strong distaste for the music of Wagner and passed this aversion down to the young Richard Strauss. Franz viewed the music of Wagner as a betrayal of German music tradition.

It was not until 1872 that Richard had a musical influence outside of his father's reach. The friend who helped further his musical tastes was Ludwig Thuille, a talented young musician. Letters between Strauss and Thuille document Strauss's hard wired anti-Semitic views, particularly when it came to the music of Jewish composers.²⁷ In 1874 Strauss started school at Ludwigsgymnasium, and by this time he had already learned to play the piano and violin and had lessons in music theory. Between 1874 and 1879 Strauss honed his compositional skills. By 1878 Strauss had declared himself a "Wagnerian" after seeing a production of *Die Walküre*. In 1879 The Munich Court Orchestra premiered his first large-scale work, his Symphony in D minor which showed Mozart's influence on his style. In the winter of 1882, he studied at Munich University, but only for two terms. In the summer of 1883 Munich Court Orchestra conductor Franz Wüllner took Strauss to Bayreuth.²⁸ In 1884, a year after Wagner's death Hans von Bülow received a score of *Serenade* by Strauss and this led to commissions and an ongoing relationship between the two. This relationship was significant not only because of the implications for

²⁵ Matthew Boyden, "Richard Strauss." Book. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999, 1-12.

²⁶ Tim Ashley, "Richard Strauss." Book. 20th-Century Composers. London: Phaidon, 1999, 15.

²⁷ Matthew Boyden, "Richard Strauss." Book. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999, 11.

²⁸ Tim Ashley, "Richard Strauss." Book. 20th-Century Composers. London: Phaidon, 1999, 27.

Strauss's career, but also because Bülow had previously travelled with Wagner and conducted his music. In 1885 Strauss emerged as a composer of lieder after his move to Meiningen to work for Duke George of Mannstädt. It was during this time that he composed *Die Nacht*, *Zueignung*, and *Allerseelen*. These songs showed the first hints of Strauss's compositional style.²⁹ The next important influence on Strauss's song writing would come in the form of his future wife Pauline de Ahna. After seeing her perform Agathe in Weber's *Der Freischütz* while on holiday, he was put in contact with her by Max Steinitzer as a potential teacher for her. Though it took a while for their romance to blossom, her ability to sustain long, high phrases influenced Strauss's song writing from that point forward.³⁰

Strauss experienced much success as a composer of orchestral music as well as opera, but in this program, song will be the focus. Since the *Vier Letzte Lieder* were his last songs and published posthumously, this account of his history will pick up in the year 1933. The period of 1933-1945 is just as important as the years of his early education and successes. It was during this time that the Adolf Hitler came to power as the leader of his right-wing coalition, The Third Reich. Strauss's involvement with the Reich shows his ability to act in his own interests and turn a blind eye to the suffering of millions.

From the very beginning of Hitler's reign, Strauss saw career opportunity. On the fiftieth anniversary of Wagner's death, (1933) Strauss stepped in to conduct *Parsifal* at Bayreuth after political tensions drove Arturo Toscanini to abandon it. Strauss met Hitler that summer and from that point forward Bayreuth was funded directly through Nazi accounts. Strauss had gained popularity at this point in his career and though his music pushed into "decadent" boundaries that

²⁹ Ibid, 31.

³⁰ Ibid, 41.

the Nazi's opposed, they decided it was better to use him as a mouthpiece for the regime than to ban his works.³¹ In the same year Strauss became president of the Reichsmusikkammer (RMR) which was a propaganda machine for the Nazi party. In this role Strauss legislated membership which required all German musicians to prove their racial purity as defined by the Nazi party. These records were later used by the Gestapo to exclude and remove them from Germany. Though Strauss never joined the Nazi party formally, his son was a registered member. Between his actions as president of the RMR and the proud father of a Nazi party member Strauss took little issue with the events around him. In the weeks following Germany's surrender in World War II Thomas Mann paid a visit to Strauss who was staying in Garmisch. Mann noticed that when Strauss spoke of the Third Reich he acted as though it was outside of his experience. He showed no remorse or sympathy.³²

When a Jeep full of American soldiers and allies closed in on Strauss's home in Garmisch he was instructed to evacuate the house within fifteen minutes. Rather than obey this order, he opened the door and announced that he was the composer of *Rosenkavalier* and *Salome* and instructed the soldiers to leave him alone. Though this behavior seems bold beyond comprehension, the soldiers did just that. They posted a sign on the home noting that this property was off limits for evacuation. However, Strauss's privileges were short lived once the allies left and he was to face the Tribunals that would hold him accountable for his involvement with the Nazi regime. At this point Strauss and his wife fled to Switzerland to avoid prosecution. Though Strauss saw his move as a fresh start, his reputation as a Nazi sympathizer traveled with him. The Strauss family considered moving to America, but his reputation was even worse in the states. Once again, Strauss showed his self-interest by stating publicly that "The Nazis were

³¹ Tim Ashley, Richard Strauss." Book. 20th-Century Composers. London: Phaidon, 1999,163.

³² Matthew Boyden, "Richard Strauss." Book. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999, 352-357.

criminals...they close the theaters, and my operas could not be given." Money became a problem for Strauss. Pauline was sick and unable to travel. Richard was forced to travel alone to London 1947. Just a year later he would set Joseph von Eichendorff's (1788-1857) *Im Abendrot* which is now placed as the final song in *Vier letzte Lieder*. Strauss felt the song should not stand alone, so he chose four songs by Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) to form a set. Strauss only set three of the poems he selected: *Frühling*, *Beim Schlafengehen*, and *September*. The set of four songs was named *Vier letzte Lieder* by Eugen Roth after Strauss's death. Though it was long believed that these were the last songs Strauss wrote, a manuscript for *Malven* was discovered in the safe of Betty Knobel in 1982. It included an inscription from Strauss indicating that it was his last song.³³

The *Vier letzte Lieder* are a breath-taking work. Should Strauss's work still be performed given his sordid involvement with the Nazi regime? That is a question for each performer to ask themselves. In this program the music was chosen based on the poetry. Hermann Hesse denounced the Nazi regime, and Eichendorff wasn't alive when the atrocities occurred. Still, the music was written by a man who furthered his career with the blood of the innocent. If this music is to be performed, it must always be with an element of education to the audience. Over time the atrocities of the Holocaust can fade into a distant memory. The music of Wagner and Strauss is slowly separating from this dark history. It is the responsibility of performers to tell the story of the poets, the composers, and of the history in which the art was created. In the end, it is my faith in Strauss's perspective on death that earned its place on the end of this program. It is my faith that the dedicatee lives now a thousandfold more deeply.

³³ Tim Ashely, "Richard Strauss." Book. 20th-Century Composers. London: Phaidon, 1999, 206-208.

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RECITAL 3 PROGRAM

Elise Eden, Soprano
Dustin Dunn, Piano
Justin Velic, Marimba
John Etsell, Piano

Britton Recital Hall

Grandmother's Hymnal

Dustin Dunn (b. 1996)

I. It Is Well...

II. Amazing Grace

Five Songs for Voice and Marimba

Lynn Glassock (b. 1946)

I. It sifts from leaden sieves

II. A murmur

III. The sun kept setting

IV. Two butterflies

V. The summer lapsed away

Intermission

Songs of Autumn

Jessica Hunt (b. 1987)

I. Clouds at Evening

II. October Evening

III. October Week-End

IV. Oct. 27 Lunar Eclipse

V. Watch the Lights Fade

Levi 501s

I. Driving

II. "We need to talk..."

III. Levi 501s

IV. The Last Patrol

Death Is... from *Thurso's Landing*

RECITAL 3 PROGRAM NOTES

It sifts from leaden sieves

Emily Dickenson

It sifts from Leaden Sieves -
It powders all the Wood.
It fills with Alabaster Wool
The Wrinkles of the Road -

It makes an even Face
Of Mountain, and of Plain -
Unbroken Forehead from the East
Unto the East again -

It reaches to the Fence -
It wraps it Rail by Rail
Till it is lost in Fleeces -
It deals Celestial Vail

To Stump, and Stack - and Stem -
A Summer's empty Room -
Acres of Joints, where Harvests were,
Recordless, but for them -

It Ruffles Wrists of Posts
As Ankles of a Queen -
Then stills it's Artisans - like Ghosts -
Denying they have been -

The sun kept setting

The sun kept setting, setting still;
No hue of afternoon
Upon the village I perceived, -
From house to house 't was noon.
The dusk kept dropping, dropping still;
No dew upon the grass,
But only on my forehead stopped,
And wandered in my face.
My feet kept drowsing, drowsing still,
My fingers were awake;
Yet why so little sound myself
Unto my seeming make?
How well I knew the light before!
I could not see it now.

A Murmur

A Murmur in the Trees - to note -
Not loud enough - for Wind -
A Star - not far enough to seek -
Nor near enough - to find -

A long - long Yellow - on the Lawn -
A Hubbub - as of feet -
Not audible - as Ours - to Us -
But dapperer - More Sweet -

A Hurrying Home of little Men
To Houses unperceived -
All this - and more - if I should tell -
Would never be believed -

Of Robins in the Trundle bed
How many I espy
Whose Nightgowns could not hide the
Wings -
Although I heard them try -

But then I promised ne'er to tell -
How could I break My Word?
So go your Way - and I'll go Mine -
No fear you'll miss the Road.

The summer lapsed away

As imperceptibly as Grief
The Summer lapsed away—
Too imperceptible at last
To seem like Perfidy—
A Quietness distilled
As Twilight long begun,
Or Nature spending with herself
Sequestered Afternoon—
The Dusk drew earlier in—
The Morning foreign shone—
A courteous, yet harrowing Grace,
As Guest, that would be gone—
And thus, without a Wing
Or service of a Keel

'Tis dying, I am doing; but
I'm not afraid to know.

Two Butterflies

Two Butterflies went out at Noon—
And waltzed above a Farm—
Then stepped straight through the
Firmament
And rested on a Beam—

And then—together bore away
Upon a shining Sea—
Though never yet, in any Port—
Their coming mentioned—be—

If spoken by the distant Bird—
If met in Ether Sea
By Frigate, or by Merchantman—
No notice—was—to me—

CLOUDS AT EVENING

Robinson Jeffers

Enormous cloud-mountains that form over
Point Lobos and into the sunset,
Figures of fire on the walls of to-night's
storm,
Foam of gold in gorges of fire, and the great
file of warrior angels:
Dreams gathering in the curded brain of the
earth,
The sky the brain-vault, on the threshold of
sleep: poor earth, you like your children
By inordinate desires tortured make dreams?
Storms more enormous, wars nobler, more
toppling mountains, more jeweled waters,
more free
Fires on impossible headlands...as a poor girl
Wishing her lover taller and more desirous,
and herself maned with gold,
Dreams the world right, in the cold bed, about
dawn.
Dreams are beautiful; the slaves of form are
beautiful also; I have grown to believe
A stone is a better pillow than many visions.

Our Summer made her light escape
Into the Beautiful.

OCTOBER EVENING

Male-throated under the shallow sea-fog
Moaned a ship's horn quivering the shorelong
granite.
Coyotes toward the valley made answer,
Their little wolf-pads in the dead grass by the
stream
Wet with the young season's first rain,
Their jagged wail trespassing among the steep
stars.
What stars? Aldebaran under the dove-leash
Pleiades. I thought, in an hour Orion will be
risen,
Be glad for summer is dead and the sky
Turns over to darkness, good storms, few
guests, glad rivers.

OCTOBER WEEK-END

It is autumn still, but at three in the morning
All the magnificent wonders of midwinter
midnight, blue dog-star,
Orion, red Aldebaran, the ermine-fur
Pleiades,
Parading above the gable of the house.
Their music is their shining,
And the house beats like a heart with dance-
music
Because our boys have grown to the
age when girls are their music.
There is wind in the trees, and the gray
ocean's
Music on the rock.
I am warming my blood with starlight, not
with girls' eyes,
But really the night is quite mad with music.

OCT. 27 Lunar Eclipse—98% (On the Calendar)

The moon went naked to-night, she thought
she was hid In the earth shadow,
Shy and so trustful
She drew off the shining veil, slowly, slowly,
From the dove breasts to the white feet,
All her pearly body
(There was light enough)
Breathing and bare
Stood undefended,
One saw again how much more beautiful is
beauty
When the jewels and shining
Clothes are laid down.

Driving

Tim Hunt

At sixteen I knew
each twist of the creek road
and just how much
the '57 Ford could
do through the curves.
I knew when
to brake going in,
how to pull through
and hit the bits of straight where the
road veered from the creek into the
light.
It was the going that mattered,
the beat of the radio, clipping time, the tires
pulling against the turn-- being still within
the road's unreeling as if the car was
the world, as if I was the world.
And you,
in your different car, knew this too,
driving fast but not
for the speed of it-- for the motion and how
the body's minute calculations became
everything.
As they again become everything
as we slide through different curves, driving
so perfectly that again there is no world

WATCH THE LIGHTS FADE

Gray steel, cloud-shadow-stained,
The ocean takes the last lights of evening.
Loud is the voice and the foam lead-color,
And flood-tide devours the sands.
Here stand, like an old stone,
And watch the lights fade and hear the sea's
voice.
Hate and despair take Europe and Asia,
And the sea-wind blows cold.
Night comes: night will claim all.
The world is not changed, only more naked:
The strong struggle for power, and the weak
Warm their poor hearts with hate.
Night comes: come into the house,
Try around the dial for a late news-cast.
These others are America's voices: naive and
Powerful; spurious; doom-touched.
How soon? Four years or forty?
Why should an old stone pick at the future?
Stand on your shore, old stone, be still while
the Sea-wind salts your head white.

"We need to talk..."

Let us imagine that we are beside a creek.
The water pools as if it is still.
Looking out, each with our carefully gathered
stones,
the smooth ones, flat, rounded, we skip them
across the surface.
Each touch of the stone is another kiss
deflecting from the moments of water.
It is all in the angle of the hand,
the stone spinning off the end of the finger.
We have become so good at this we no longer
think about it.
The stone comes into the hand, the arm arcs,
and we are talking on this surface of water,
your stone, then mine, yours again across
the late morning.

but glass and speed.

The Last Patrol

for Verdon "Spur" Spurlock, 1916-1999

In the dark beyond the window
the channel's deep current and incoming tide
are a diagonal of riffled water.

It is there
below the one tree where the eagle sometimes
pauses from his fishing.

Even this late there are a few lights long
the far shore-- the scatter of houses where
someone cannot sleep, the blinking of the
refinery that by day
is a thicket against the stretch of the mud
flats.

You have never forgotten the desert stars
beyond
the campfire's ebbing, the dark tang of the
horses, and clumps of sage after the day's
long ride.

You were, then, a boy in a company of men
masquerading as men, and so already a man.
That was before the long march-- the hills of
Italy, France, Korea's frozen mud, patrol after
patrol of the boys who were men and too
often the flicker in the eyes asking
belief as the dark spread out to the fingertips
you held as firmly as you could.

Tonight in the chair that faces the window
you walk a different patrol--not through death
but with it, as the pain, a bursting shell, ebbs
to the fingertips with the turning tide.

It is not easy to refuse the delay of tubes and
needles.

It is not easy to turn away from the slow
decay, to not cry out,
to die alone, but the stars above the tide are
desert stars, are fireflies flickering against the
weave of trees.

Through the window's glass you cannot hear
the slide of wings as the owl's shadow blinks
across the tiny points of light.

Levi 501s

At the mirror he works for hours learning to
sneer and smile
at the same time -- one
for the boys, one for the ladies. And thank
god for Levis
with your hands in your pockets and a road
house drawl--
'cause every country boy can sing out a half
his mouth, and baby every town has a two bit
mason-dixon where us country boys dangle
lines from the
ends of our Marlboros
'til it's back in the saddle again.

"Death is..." *from Thurso's Landing*

If I'd never been here, nothing would have been the same.

You'd not be hurt, you'd be riding on the hill, oh!

How I wish I had died in misery before you saw me.

I wish you had seen me lying five days dead in the jagged mountain.

I wish you had seen me blackening on a white rock in a dry place, the vultures dipping their white beaks in my eyes, their red heads in my side, you'd make them raise the great wings and soar!

And if you had seen me lying black mouthed in the filth of death, you'd not have wanted me then.

And nothing would be as it is, but you'd be lucky, and I quiet.

What's all this troublesome affair of living?

What's it all about?

What's it for?

Do you know something that's hidden from the weak like me?

Or do we live for no other reason than because we dread to die?

I dread it so! I can't bear it!

For now it seems that all the billion and a half of our lives on earth and the more that died long ago, and the things that happened and will happen again and all the beacons of time up to this time look very senseless, a roadless forest full of cries and ignorance!

I used to wish for round jewels, and a fur cloak, and a set of laughing friends to fool with, and one of those long, low stream-lined cars that glide quietly and shine like satin.

So maybe, just maybe, Life might have been precious, at the best.

But can life be precious, at the worst?

Maybe death is...death...is..

For love...I do this for love!

Dustin Dunn (b. 1996) was born on February 19th in a small town in Southern Missouri. He was raised on a property that has been in the family for a century. Dustin's nuclear family is not musical, and he was raised in a blue-collar home. His mother is a nurse, and his father is physically disabled, so he spent a lot of time at his grandmother's house as a child while his mother worked. In the early 2000's his grandmother ordered an electronic keyboard after seeing an infomercial. The keyboard came with sound banks, midi capabilities, and it had lit keys to teach familiar tunes that were pre-programmed. Dustin was immediately interested in the keyboard and would sit at it for hours while at his grandmother's house. After listening to a song for a few times Dustin was able to pick up the melody and play it from memory. One day his grandmother noticed him picking out a tune on the piano and asked him what he was playing. Once she realized he was picking out the tune without the aid of the lit keys, she called her sister and arranged for him to take lessons with a sister-in-law who was an amateur musician. After a year of study, he had learned everything she knew. Following this basic education, Dustin taught himself church hymns. They built his reading skills and were familiar to him and his family.

When Dustin was a freshman in high school, he had developed his musical skills significantly through practice. He began ordering music and teaching himself popular tunes. The high school music teacher took notice of his skills and referred him for his first gig. He was asked to play at a community dinner for a 4-H group. He played some of the popular music he knew, but also one of his own pieces. Dustin was writing music at this point, mostly pieces for solo piano. His composition caught the attention of County Prosecutor Parker who was in attendance. At the end of the event, Parker introduced Dustin to his wife, who had a Master's Degree in Piano Pedagogy. This solo piece also ended up being a competition piece that won a

prize in the "Creating Original Music Project" which was a community movement to encourage young musicians.

A month later Dunn called Emily Parker, the woman who would become his teacher and mentor. He played his original piano piece for her as an audition for her studio. After hearing him she agreed to teach him every other week, even though she was not taking private students at the time. For four years she taught him music theory, composition, and piano lessons. She wrote letters of recommendation and advocated for his admission into the University of Missouri for his bachelor's degree.

Once he was accepted to the University of Missouri, he studied with Stefan Freund, William McKenny, Carolina Heredia and Michael Budds. Doctor Michael Budds was a musicology teacher, and his focus was American music. Dustin was inspired by his passion for the subject. Budds encouraged Dustin to embrace his own roots and sounds. Dustin credits Budds for helping him learn how to think about music. Carolina Heredia taught Dunn composition and commissioned Dunn's compositions for her ensemble of University of Michigan Alums. Heredia suggested that Dustin apply for the Master's Degree in Composition at the University of Michigan to study with Evan Chambers. Dunn says that while Budds taught him to think about music, Chambers taught him how to hear it. *Grandmother's Hymnal* is an identity piece that combines the advice of these mentors.

Grandmother's Hymnal was first imagined at St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana in 2019. Dunn attended a summer intensive that focused on craftsmanship in composition. Through a series of prompts, "It is well" was sketched, and he finished it that summer. In the first month of his master's degree at the University of Michigan, he finished the second movement under the guidance of Chambers.

This recital performance is the live public premiere. With Dunn at the piano, the piece evokes the sounds of his childhood and the melodies of the hymns that surrounded him. The selected tunes come from a family heirloom hymnal given to Dunn by his grandmother. He chose the pages that showed the most wear and reimagined their sounds. The first movement references "It is Well". The second movement is a celebration of life that uses the hymn "Amazing Grace". Memory distorts the pitches of these tunes, and even the rhythm.³⁴

Five Songs for Voice and Marimba was written in 1994 by Lynn Glassock (b. 1946). Glassock is a native of Dallas, Texas and earned his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music in Percussion Performance from the University of North Texas. He currently works as a teacher, conductor, and composer. He is the principal percussionist in the Fresno Philharmonic and is on the board of directors for the Percussive Arts Society. *Five Songs for Voice and Marimba* won first place in the Percussive Arts Society composition contest in 1994. The piece is set to five poems by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). The marimba and voice are in a duet texture and take turns painting the subjects of the text. The shifts of meter and texture evoke the changing moods within each poem. Glassock's interpretations range from whimsy to the darkest depths of despair, and the psychology is woven into its dissonant harmonies.³⁵

Jessica Hunt was born on December 16th, 1987 in Deep Springs, California. Her parents lived on a ranch, and when her mother went into labor they drove up through a 9,000 foot pass in a blizzard to get to the nearest medical facility. Hunt lived on the ranch until the age of three, then relocated to Vancouver, Washington where she lived until she was 15 years old. In her earliest years she had a toy piano and expressed a desire to take lessons. After some persistence,

³⁴ All biographical information was collected in a live interview between Elise Eden and Dustin Dunn in the Summer of 2021.

³⁵ Biographical information on Lynn Glassock was sourced from his brief biography on the C-Alan Publication's website.

Hunt's parents put her in a group piano class. She was kicked out on the first day for "fixing" the melodies and not following instructions. This was the first sign that Hunt was headed for composition. Once her parents found a different teacher, she negotiated an arrangement with her. Hunt would play the original version of her homework songs if she was allowed to share her own versions afterwards.

Hunt attended the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics where she studied French Horn. Mike van Liew, a guest artist trumpet player, stepped in as an emergency replacement for the previous director. He conducted the school musical and took over as director of the bands. He immediately recognized Hunt's musical talents. He put her into the advanced ensemble, but under the condition that she learn to play an octave scale by the end of the week. Hunt managed to play seven notes of the scale and her director arranged pieces that accommodated her limited range. Van Liew's arrangements often included irregular meters and syncopations that now appear frequently in Hunt's compositions. She also played piano and learned the rhythmically complex keys part of Bernstein's *West Side Story*. She was infatuated with this score and ended up injuring her arms and hands while trying to reach all the voices of the chords at the age of eleven. This injury dashed her hopes of becoming a concert pianist but opened the door for her interest in other musical pursuits. Van Liew started an afterschool jazz band and Hunt asked if she could sing with the group. She was eleven years old at the time. Hunt was required that to take an improvised solo, but instead she went home and wrote one. Once van Liew realized that her solo was composed in advance he helped her develop her improvisation skills.

Van Liew insisted that Hunt learn counterpoint. Thankfully, she loved to read. Every Friday Hunt and her father travelled from Vancouver to Portland. They regularly visited the EM

record store and library. On one of these trips Hunt picked up a few books on counterpoint from "Powell's Books" and started taking lessons with van Liew.

At fifteen her father got a new job in Illinois, and she started studying with Mario Pelusi. Pelusi was the Chair of Music at Illinois Wesleyan University, and seldom accepted students who were not currently studying at the university. Under his mentorship she learned to reduce texture and expose her melodies. He required writing with whole-tone scales, all interval tetrachords, and this helped Hunt learn the grammar of dissonance. Eventually Hunt attended Illinois Wesleyan University, but transferred to Columbia College to earn her BM in composition. While at Columbia, Hunt studied composition with Ilya Levinson. Gaudete ensemble came to Columbia as artists in residence, and the students wrote for them. Gaudete liked Hunt's work and have since commissioned seven pieces from her. This was her professional start as a composer. During this time, she was also working as a musical director and pianist at an improv comedy club. These disparate influences would leave a mark on her compositional style.

After graduating from Columbia, Hunt took a five-year break from academia. She directed, composed, coached, and taught voice lessons. During this time, she started thinking about writing an opera. After reading Robinson Jeffer's *Thurso's Landing*, she set a single line of the poem. Hunt was overwhelmed by respect for Jeffer's work and decided to attend graduate school. She wanted to have a complete compositional vocabulary before setting this massive piece. She attended DePaul University in Chicago, but she met opposition when she expressed interest in composing an opera. Her time at DePaul was spent studying process composition, fractional proportions, and microtuning. She began composing *Thurso's Landing* in secret while earning her degree.

Hunt's interest in research led her to apply for doctoral programs. She presented her opera concept in her applications, and she chose the University of Michigan. She studied with Erik Santos and recalls a transformative moment while setting one of her father's poems for chorus. She presented two different approaches to setting the text, and Santos suggested that she meld those two styles into the same piece. This suggestion gave Hunt the freedom to develop her own sound.

Her style was also embraced and developed through her time at the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy. Frank encouraged Hunt to write in a way that brought her joy rather than compartmentalizing her styles. Between Santos and Frank, Hunt felt empowered to embrace her sound and write joyfully.

Kristin Kuster and Evan Chambers were huge supporters and influences on her writing as well. Kuster was able to decode her compositional logic and detect when she was writing outside of it. She was able to hold Hunt accountable for every moment of her music and helped her hone her craft. Kuster solidified her grammatical rules as a composer.

In the summer of 2018 Hunt was diagnosed with Trench Fever. The infection permanently damaged her heart and autonomic nervous system. Things like pulse, blood pressure, and digestion became irregular. Within months Hunt was a member of the disabled community. Tasks that were once simple seemed impossible, and she faced new challenges in her education. She now uses her platform as a composer to raise awareness of the daily struggles of the disabled.

Songs of Autumn was written in 2007 as a commission piece for an event honoring the work of Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. Robinson Jeffers was an American poet known for his presentation of landscape and use of

speaking voice in his work. Hunt's father Tim is a Jeffers scholar. Tim Hunt has spent his life editing the definitive volumes of Jeffers' work. When Jessica was in her late teens, she began reading Jeffers and immediately understood why her father viewed him with such reverence. She chose these poems based on the common theme of the fall season. Hunt uses the voice as a dramatic tool, showing the transformation from awareness to participation in the poetry. The piano's role is mostly harmonic, using stacked fifths in varying combinations.

Levis 501s are set to the poetry of Tim Hunt. His poetry is intensely personal and evocative. The four poems in this set are from *Fault Lines*, a collection of poetry that explores the voice of a man through his different life stages. The progression travels through youth, love, social awareness, and finally death of a loved one. The text is layered, and Jessica clarifies the layer in her musical setting using polychords throughout the cycle. At first, they are subtle, but by the time the last song is sung they become the sole source of harmony and texture. Jessica's intimate knowledge of the source of the poetry is evident in her settings. In her work setting the final poem, she shared the grief of losing her grandfather that her father wrote.

"Death is..." is the final aria in *Thurso's Landing*. The opera is in two acts and is based on the epic poem by Robinson Jeffers with the same title. The story is set in the 1930s during the construction of Highway One in California. The Thurso family lives nearby in a failing farmhouse in the ravine, and they struggle to accept the modernization the highway brings. Helen Thurso is Reave's wife, and the conflict between the couple fuels the most dramatic moments in the opera. One of the most intense moments occurs after Helen has an affair with the dynamite man Rick Armstrong. Helen runs away with Rick but is tracked down by Reave. Reave violently beats Armstrong within inches of his life. In an act of fate, Reave is later paralyzed by the breaking of a line holding an old cable car. Helen views this accident as a just punishment for

Reave's violent reaction to the affair, but also feels guilt for creating the conflict. In "Death is.." Helen reminisces on the tragic events, but also on her broken dreams. She ponders what ending this tragedy could possibly bring, and what role she will play to finish it.³⁶

³⁶ All biographical information about Jessica and Tim Hunt was collected in a live interview between Elise Eden and Jessica Hunt in the Summer of 2021.